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Paul introduces Consumer Protection package *Legislative initiatives deal with satellite TV, health foods*

WASHINGTON, DC -- US Rep. Ron Paul this week introduced his "Consumer Protection Package," which strikes at burdensome federal regulations. The package consists of two measures, one repeals regulations that interfere with consumers' access to truthful information about foods and dietary supplements in order to make informed choices about their health. The second bill repeals federal regulations that interfere with consumers' ability to avail themselves of desired television programming. The Consumer Health Free Speech Act, HR1077, has five original cosponsors, including Helen Chenoweth (R, ID), Peter DeFazio (D, OR), John Duncan (R, TN), John Hostettler (R, IN), and Bob Stump (R, AZ). "Scientific research in nutrition over the past few years has demonstrated how various foods and other dietary supplements are safe and effective in preventing or mitigating many diseases," said Rep. Paul, a physician with more than 30 years in private medical practice. "Currently, however, disclosure of these well-documented statements triggers more extensive drug-like FDA regulation. The result is consumers cannot learn about simple and inexpensive ways to improve their health." But the measure is about more than just health concerns, Rep. Paul said. "Allowing American consumers access to information about the benefits of foods and dietary supplements will help America's consumers improve their health. However, this bill is about more than physical health, it is about freedom. The first amendment forbids Congress from abridging freedom of all speech, including commercial speech." The second measure is the Television Consumer Freedom Act, HR 1078, which repeals federal regulations that interfere with consumers' ability to avail themselves of desired television programming. Rep. Paul said his measure repeals "federal prohibitions and allows satellite service providers to more freely negotiate with program owners and broadcasters for programming desired by satellite service subscribers." "For the last several weeks, congressional offices have been flooded with calls from rural satellite TV customers who are understandably upset because their satellite service providers have informed them that they will lose access to certain network television programs," said Rep. Paul. "In an attempt to protect the rights of network program creators and affiliate local stations, a federal court in Florida properly granted an injunction to prevent the satellite service industry from making certain programming available to its customers. This is programming for which the program creators and owners have not been properly compensated." Rep. Paul said the root of the problem is government interference in the marketplace. "Government has previously intervened to invalidate `exclusive dealings' contracts between private parties, namely cable service providers and program creators, and have most recently assumed the role of price setter."

